

## International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women Worship Resources

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women calls on each of us to acknowledge the various types of violence being inflicted upon women around the world. We must use our voices to support women who have survived violence and offer our platforms to uplift their narratives in hopes of building a more just world for the girls and women in our communities as well as those who will come after us.

### Welcome

Unbeknownst to many, women across the globe are experiencing more violence, particularly domestic violence, and less safe spaces since the spread of COVID-19. The crisis is so urgent that the UN is referring to it as the [Shadow Pandemic](#). So, today we gather to center the women, the girls, the femmes. We center them specifically to uplift their truths and their struggles. To shed light on the ways society has failed them and left them vulnerable to violence. We call on ourselves to become more informed on the violence against women, and we call on our beloved communities to hold and protect those women.

**Call to Worship** *adapted from A Layin on Of Hands by Ntozake Shange. This poem is from her choreopoem For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf. The choreopoem tells the narrative of seven women who have suffered under the oppression of racism, sexism, classism, and more intersections.*

One: i waz missin somethin

All: a layin on of hands

One: i wanted to jump outta my bones and be done with myself...i waz missin somethin

All: a layin on of hands

One: it waz too much, i fell into a numbness...i waz missin somthin

All: a layin on of hands

One: i waz missin somethin...a layin on of hands, the holiness of myself released

All: a layin on of hands

One: i found god in myself and i loved her/i loved her fiercely

All: amen.

**Prayer of Confession** *from the Health and Human Service Sunday 2021 by the Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry*

One: O God of Becoming, we claim ourselves as your beloved and name the messy reality of being human.

All: In your presence, we do not shy away from our struggles, failings, or regrets.

One: By your invitation, we come to you not in shame, but with courage, seeking right relationship

All: With you, with each other, and all of creation.

One: And so we collectively ask for your forgiveness. Forgive us for when confronted with poverty,

All: we responded with scarcity and greed.

One: For when the stranger came seeking refuge,

All: and we responded with exclusion and detention.

One: For when the sick and vulnerable needed care and protection,

All: and we responded with negligence and entitlement.

One: For when the imprisoned were denied justice and healing,

All: and we responded with violence and bondage.

One: Yet, because you first loved us,

All: we are emboldened to live a life of return and reconciliation.

One: Hear our prayers of reckoning and relearning, to live into your ways of peace, more and more each day. Amen.

## **A Lament for the Women**

Hear us as we cry out to you, Oh, Molder of the Moons.

You who guided Hagar to the well and danced to Miriam's song.

Are we no longer allotted the merest touch of your garment? It feels as if you consent to us remaining nameless, fading into the crowd...unhealed.

We have sat at your feet, being both strong and courageous, waiting for the waves of living water to wash over us.

So, wash over us, watch over us. Deliver us from violence and provide the swift justice we seek.

We have journeyed this path together over the course of many moons and many suns, all of us shifting into different shapes, so we trust the fullness of your faithfulness.

Here, in your fullness, we will come together to devise, dance toward, and delight in our freedom and wellness.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God in all your names and forms, we come to you today grateful for the women, our sister-friends, our mothers, our cousins, our aunties, and many more. We thank you for the women that have survived and will continue to thrive. We give thanks for the beloved communities that have held, and will continue to hold, the women who encounter the violence of this world. Giving thanks for the sacred space that was provided and shared today, we ask that you continue to journey with us as we move toward a safe society for all women.

## **Benediction**

May the truth of God embolden us. May the light of God guide us. May the love of God draw our circle near and wide that we may better protect and uplift the women of our beloved communities.

These liturgical elements and prayers were written and gathered by Essence Ellis,  
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### **Additional Online Resources**

United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day>

Safe Women, Strong Nations: <https://indianlaw.org/safewomen>

Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence: <https://www.api-gbv.org/>

Human Right's Campaign Foundation's "Dismantling a Culture of Violence":  
<https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/files/assets/resources/Dismantling-a-Culture-of-Violence-010721.pdf>